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ABSTRACT

As part of a campus self-study, more than 100 faculty members as a mid-sized private university met to explore the scholarship of teaching, and in a subsequent conversation, to focus on things that hinder the scholarship of teaching. To assess faculty workloads and determine their effect on the learning environment, a survey was developed and distributed to 301 faculty members in 5 colleges. Usable surveys were returned by 67 faculty members, some from each college. Years of service, tenure status, rank, average class size, reported teaching load, office hours, course preparation time, and research time were all analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The majority of faculty members reported a 9-hour undergraduate workload, with total hours per week in teaching-related activities averaging 37.5. When research and creative activity were added to total work time, a total of 54.5 hours per week was reported. These data demonstrate that this university faculty spends 68% of total workload on teaching and related activities. A comparison with national figures for similar and different institutions suggests the total work time per week for this university is higher than for other private universities, and that faculty spend more time teaching than is average. Additional study is necessary to determine exactly how teaching load affects the learning environment on campus. (Contains 8 figures and 13 references.) (Author/SLD)

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A Study of Faculty Workload as a Means of Improving the Student Learning Environment

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Paper Presented at the American Educational Research Association 's Annual Meeting in New Orleans
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ABSTRACT

In the 1999-2000 academic year, over 100 faculty at a mid-sized, private comprehensive university came together for a Carnegie Academy Campus Program Conversation. The goal of the conversation was to explore the scholarship of teaching. During Conversation One, the following definition emerged: **"The scholarship of teaching is the shared, systematic, and critical inquiry and assessment of teaching and learning".** In a subsequent Conversation Two, the discussion focused on things that hinder the scholarship of teaching. Faculty workload, that is, heavy workloads, were identified as hindrances to the scholarship of teaching. In order to assess faculty workloads and determine their effect on the learning environment, a faculty survey was developed. The faculty workload survey was distributed through campus mail to all 301 faculty members in five colleges. Usable surveys were returned by 67 faculty members; there were respondents from each college. Years of service, tenure status, rank, average class size, reported teaching load, office hours, course preparation time and research time were all analyzed using SPSS (SPSS, 1994). Descriptive statistics and (frequencies and measures of central tendency) were run. The majority of faculty reported a nine hour undergraduate workload; total hours spent per week in teaching related activities averaged 37.5 hours per week. When research and creative activity were added to total work time, a total of 54.5 hours per week was reported. These data demonstrated that this university faculty spend 68% of their total workload on teaching and related activities. A comparison of similar and different institutions was done. Future conversations need to be held in order to determine exactly how teaching load affects the learning environment on campus.

PURPOSE

Bradley University, a mid-sized, private university located in Peoria, IL, advocates a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning: "... is committed to excellence in teaching and learning" (2002-2003 Undergraduate Catalog, p.5). In keeping with that commitment, the university administrators made the decision to examine faculty workload and the impact teaching schedules and related academic work have on the students' learning environment. This examination came in the form of two Carnegie Academy Campus Program Conversations. The purpose of this study was to investigate faculty workload on Bradley's campus in order to improve the students' scholarship of learning and learning environment.

PERSPECTIVES

The issue of faculty workload has been continuously studied over time. (Meyer, 1998). Over 30 years ago, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) adopted a statement on faculty workload (ACADEME, 2000). Significant changes in education have taken place since that time. Education today emphasizes independent studies, new materials such as the internet and web based courses, international experiences as well as interdisciplinary approaches which have prompted the need for revision of these guidelines.

Over the past 20 years, changes in amounts of time faculty spent in teaching, advising, and research activities have also been examined. Researchers (Milem, Berger, and Dey, 2000) found that institutions are becoming more similar in their patterns of faculty time allocation, especially time spent on research. A multilevel modeling method to analyze research productivity was used by Porter and Umbach (2000) who concluded

that faculty work is extremely complex and cannot be explained using single measures for research productivity.

Krahenbuhl (1998) also looked at faculty work – how do faculty members spendtheir time? Is the distribution effort appropriate in terms of kind, amount and quality? What is the best use of faculty time from the perspectives of students, taxpayers, a democratic society in need of educated people, and the employees of our graduates? Krauhenbuhl goes on to suggest that it is learning, not teaching, that matters the most and that faculty –guided learning occurs in many settings beyond the classroom.

Middaugh (1998) studied teaching load among tenured and tenure track faculty at a variety of institutions of higher learning. He concluded that tenured and tenure-track faculty generate a much larger proportion of undergraduate teaching activity than might be expected. A collaborative effort to measure faculty work was done by Bensimon and O'Neil (1998) in order to produce an assessment instrument that documents both an individual's productivity in research, teaching, and service as well as his or her worth in relation to the institution's goals. Fine and Nazworth (1999) addressed faculty's perceptions on as "learning community" participants. Older faculty tended not to be as concerned with the benefits of participation as younger faculty.

In 1996, the AAUP publication, ACADEME, included several articles related to faculty workload. Clausen (1996) described a study done by the Pennsylvania State legislature in 1995. This Select Committee on Higher Education examined faculty activities, including teaching loads, research, public service, and institutional service. The results of the study indicated that teaching is the major responsibility of most faculty members. Additionally, in four-year institutions where teaching loads were typically nine

to twelve hours per week, preparation, grading, laboratory supervision, conference with students, curricular planning, and keeping up in one's field resulted in a total of 45 to 55 hours worked per week (Clausen, 1996).

A second article in the ACADEME (Shelton and Skaggs,1996) examined how faculty spend their time. The data reported in this article is the work of Robert Blackburn and Janet Lawrence's 1995 study, "Faculty at Work" who gathered workload information from 4,280 full-time faculty members. The researchers found that faculty who teach more, publish less; and the higher the teaching load, the less time professors spend on teaching-related work per course. Thus, a quality of teaching issue was introduced. The authors suggested that good teaching requires a mixture of qualities, and that all types of intellectual activity by faculty should be valued because they benefit both the community inside and outside the university.

A more recent report in ACADEME (2000) titled "Interpretive Comments on the Statement on Faculty Workload", reinterpreted the AAUP's 1969 statement on workload. Maximum and preferred workloads were reviewed and it was suggested that differences in workloads should correspond to differing research and instructional expectations at different kinds of institutions. In the introductory paragraph, members of Committee C reiterated that "no single formula for an equitable faculty workload can be devised for all of American higher education"(p.70). The guidelines for maximum teaching load are as follows: undergraduate, 12 hours per week with no more than 6 separate course preps for the year; for partial or total graduate instruction, 9 hours per week. However, preferred teaching load for undergraduate instruction is nine hours per week and 6 hours per week for part or total graduate teaching. Committee C

recommended that faculty participate fully in the determination of workload policy. The following inequities in the distribution of workload were identified: The difficulty of courses (number of different preparations, new courses, level of difficulty in course content, and size of classes taught) were examined. Research – which the Committee defined as "exploratory work in some special field of interest within the discipline" (p.72) – should be recognized whether it leads to publication or not. If the university emphasizes original research, teaching load should be at six hours. Responsibilities other than teaching and research such as committee work, administrative tasks, and student counseling (advising) should also be considered when determining faculty workload.

The City University of New York (CUNY) measured faculty teaching workload according to credit hours taught. Their audit system is designed to measure and compare teaching workload among faculty (2000). Some of the problems the University experienced with the audit were that faculty submitted the maximum credit hours permitted under the contract rather than actual workload, some faculty showed NO workload, and some faculty showed workload for non-structured classes. They concluded that the University must be able to detect and correct inaccurate and incomplete data and document all formulas and guidelines used in reporting teaching workload.

Middaugh's (2001) book intends to provide consistent and reliable quantitative and qualitative information on faculty productivity and accountability. The underlying theme is an attempt to counter criticism from the public and policy makers about what faculty do.

Bellas and Toutkoushian (1999) examined 14,614 full time faculty in order to define work hours, research productivity, and allocation of work time among teaching,

research and service. This study focused on gender, race/ethnicity, and marital/parental status but has implications for workload and productivity in general.

The issue of faculty workload and its effect on the student learning environment needs be continually examined. The faculty workload project at Bradley University is one attempt to evaluate the issue of faculty workload.

METHODS

Researchers collected quantitative data to assess faculty workload. Based on the results of Bradley University's Carnegie Academy Campus Program, held in January 2000, a survey was developed. The paper and pencil Faculty Workload Survey included 16 descriptive items addressing demographics, current teaching loads, and description of faculty responsibilities. These 16 items were analyzed with SPSS (SPSS, 1994). Descriptive statistics (frequencies and measures of central tendency) were run. Goodness-of-fit and mean differences were determined where appropriate. Data compiled from the surveys was compared to other universities: public and private research universities, public and private doctoral granting universities, and public and private comprehensive universities (US Education Department, 1991).

DATA SOURCE

Bradley University is an independent, privately endowed institution located on a 75 acre campus in Peoria, Illinois. Bradley has an enrollment of approximately 5,000 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate students. Bradley's faculty The Faculty Workload Survey (Appendix A) was distributed through campus mail to 301 faculty members in the

five colleges: Business Administration, Communication and Fine Arts, Education and Health Sciences, Engineering and Technology, and Liberal Arts and Sciences

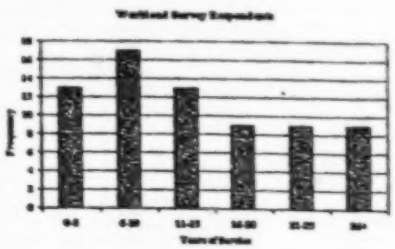
RESULTS

The tables below reflect the data collected in the areas of years of service, undergraduate teaching loads, community service hours, weekly office hours, and course development, grading and test development per week.

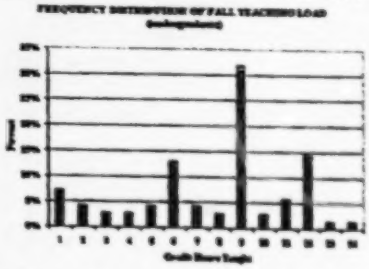
Survey Results

- ✓Usable surveys were returned by 67 faculty
- ✓11 BUS, 6 CFA, 10 EGT, 16 EHS, 24 LAS
- ✓17 Prof., 24 Assoc. Prof., 19 Asst. Prof., 4 Lecturer, 3 not specified
- ✓76% with tenure, 24% not tenured (at BU, 68% tenured)
- ✓58% of respondents were male, 42% female

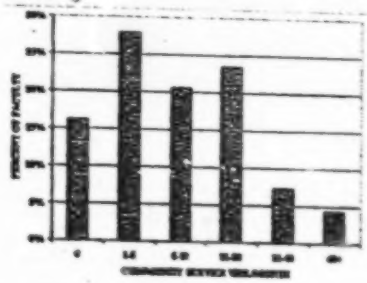
Years of Service by Faculty



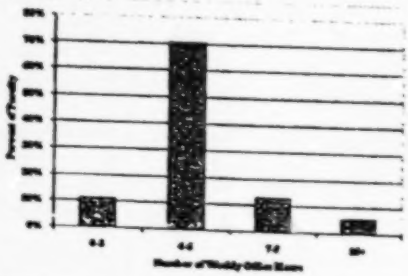
Undergraduate Teaching Loads



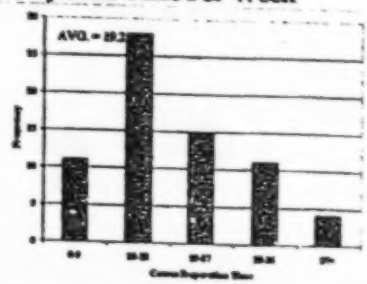
Community Service Hours By Faculty



Weekly Office Hours



Course Preparation, Grading &Test Development Time Per Week



RESULTS

The tables below reflect the data collected in the areas of time spent in teaching related activities, time spent in research and creative production, total work time, and comparison tables between Bradley and other universities.

Time Spent Per Week In Teaching Related Activities

- ✓Contact Hours = 13.4
- ✓Course Preparation = 10.9
- ✓Grading Papers = 6.7
- ✓Test Development = 1.6
- ✓Course Related Professional Development = 2.2
- ✓Supervise Students = 2.4
- ✓**TOTAL = 37.2 hours per week**

Time Per Week in Research & Creative Production

- ✓Develop or Apply Knowledge = 6.3 hrs.
- ✓Present or Exhibit Work = 4.0
- ✓**TOTAL = 10.3**

TOTAL WORK TIME

- ✓**Teaching = 37.2 hrs.** (61.3% of total time)
- ✓**Research & Creative Production = 10.3 hrs.** (11.9% of total time)
- ✓**Other Activities = 7.0 hrs.** (12.8% of total time)
- ✓**TOTAL 54.5 Hours per Week**

Percent of Total Workload Spent on Research Activities

- ✓**BU Survey 19% of Total Workload**
- ✓US Education Dept. 1991 Data

– Public Research Univ.	29%
– Private Research Univ.	30
– Public Doctoral	22
– Private Doctoral	27
– Public Comprehensive	11
– Private Comprehensive	09

BU Survey and Other National Data on Faculty Workloads

- ✓**BU Survey 54.5 hrs per week**
- ✓US Education Dept. 1991 Data
  - – Public Research Univ. 57
  - – Private Res. Univ. 56
  - – Public Doctoral 55
  - – Private Doctoral 53
  - – Public Comprehensive 52
  - – Private Comprehensive 51

Percent of Total Workload Spent on Teaching & Related Activities

- ✓**BU Survey 68% of Total Workload**
- ✓US Education Dept. 1991 Data

– Public Research Univ.	43%
– Private Research Univ.	40
– Public Doctoral	47
– Private Doctoral	39
– Public Comprehensive	62
– Private Comprehensive	62

DISCUSSION

The intent of the research project was to identify workload and its effect on the learning environment at Bradley University. The workload survey was developed and distributed to all faculty on campus. The response to the survey was disappointing. A 22% response rate was achieved. In retrospect, the survey may have been too "busy". A lot of information had to be fit into a small amount of space. Perhaps the campus mail was not the best approach. The Bradley campus is very much internet connected. We may have had a better response had the survey been posted on-line. There could be some element of suspicion as to why we wanted to know numbers in so many categories. In addition, some questions asked for "hours per year" in an attempt to average. This may have been too difficulty to compute.

In any event, the data that were collected revealed some interesting trends. The majority of respondents had between six and ten years of service. At our institution, candidates achieve tenure at the end of the sixth year. Perhaps those who responded were at the peak of their "productivity" period. By far, nine hours was the most commonly reported credit hours taught. In some departments, nursing for instance, this may translate into more than nine contact hours due to clinical labs. Hostile critics of academia would view a "six to twelve hour week ...as "part-time versus full-time work" (Clausen, 1996). Office hours reported were in the 4 - 6 range. In this author's memory, five hours are required of faculty so this number is obviously being observed. Course preparation, grading and test development consumed and average of 19.2 hours per week. The total time spent per week in teaching and related activities was 37.2 hours which is very close to a typical forty hour week.

When data from Bradley were compared to other national data the following conclusions were drawn. Bradley's "Total Work Time" per week is three hours higher than that for other private comprehensive universities (54.5 versus 51 hours). Faculty at Bradley spend a higher percentage of their time on teaching than do other private comprehensive universities (68% versus 62%); and, a much higher percentage than public or private research universities (68% versus 40-43%). Due to the mission statement that Bradley is "committed to teaching and learning" it makes sense that teaching consumes a higher percentage of time than does research and other scholarly activity.

IMPORTANCE

The study of faculty workload as it affects the learning environment of students is important. If faculty are dissatisfied with their workload, feel overwhelmed, and find themselves not achieving good student results, they suffer and consequently, students suffer. The time spent in developing creative and attractive course materials and attending to individual needs of students is immeasurable. Studies of faculty workload are needed to inform faculty of where they stand with their peer group. Knowledge about what is "average" or what is "common or expected" can help faculty assess where they stand with their own situation.

LIMITATIONS

The research reported in this paper was at a mid-sized, private, comprehensive university in the Midwest. The sample was small. However, the data reveal that this institution is not that diverse from other similar ones.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Faculty workload needs to be continuously studied. Workload among various disciplines, for instance, education, physical therapy, and nursing, needs to be studied because of the unique nature of their clinical obligations. Workload needs to be studied so that evidence is available to those who would argue that lack of creative production and excellent student evaluations can be tied to "workload - heavy".

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APPENDIX A

Carnegie Inquiry Group Faculty Work Load Survey

Please complete both sides of this survey. Place on top of the Motivated Learners' Survey, fold both together so that the return address is showing, staple and place in house mail by April 23, 2001.

Demographics

1) College CFA _____ EHS _____ LAS _____ BUS _____ EGT _____

2) Department _____ 3) Rank _____

4) Years of Service 0-5_____ 6-10_____ 11-15_____ 16-20_____ 21-25_____ 26+ _____

5) Tenured Yes_____ No_____ 6) Gender M_____ F_____

Current Teaching Load

7) a. Fall Semester

Semester hours/week

Undergraduate _____ Graduate _____

Contact hours/week

Class_____ Practicum _____ Advisement _____

Other —please specify_____ (_____)

Average class size _____ Average lab size _____

Ratio of semester hours to lab hours (circle)

(a) 1:1 (b) 1:2 (c) 1:3 (d) 1:4 (e) other

7) b. Spring Semester

Semester hours/week

Undergraduate _____ Graduate _____

Contact hours/week

Class_____ Practicum _____ Advisement _____

Other —please specify_____ (_____)

Average class size _____ Average lab size _____

Ratio of semester hours to lab hours (circle)

(a) 1:1 (b) 1:2 (c) 1:3 (d) 1:4 (e) other

Description of Responsibilities

8) Briefly describe any practicums in which you are involved (ie, hands on lab, site visits, student teaching or clinical supervision, observation, studio time)

Do you get credit hours for practicums? Yes _____ No _____

Average number of students per practicum: _____

9) Advisement

a) How many academic advisees? Undergraduate _____ Graduate _____

b) How many research/thesis advisees? _____

c) Do you have work load credit for advisement? _____

d) If so, what is the ratio of students to credit hours? _____

e) How many total hours do you advise students per semester? _____

10) Committees

a) How many committees are you on?

Department _____ College _____University _____

b) Is committee membership a requirement? _____

c) How many hours per month do you spend on committee meetings? _____

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Description of Responsibilities, continued

(side 2)

11) Community Service: How many hours per month? _____
Describe _____

12) Office hours: Are you required to have office hours? Yes____ No ____
If so, how many? _____ Actual # worked _____

13) Course preparation time
   a) How many courses are you teaching for the first time? _____
   b) How many hours of course preparation per week? _____
   c) Within your semester load, do you teach more than one section of the same course? Yes____ No____

14) Student evaluation: How many hours per week are spent evaluating students?
   a) Grading papers _____ b) Independent studies _____ c) Studio _____
   d) Test development _____ e) Clinical performance _____

15) Professional Development: Describe professional development activities related to course work that you are involved in on a regular basis (i.e. BlackBoard Inc., technology, etc.) _____ **Hrs per mo.** _____

16) Over one academic year, how many hours you spend on the following scholarly and creative production projects?

a) Creating new knowledge or new works (designing and conducting experiments, fieldwork, data analysis & integrating new knowledge into industry, community & culture. Composition, playwriting, creating art, video & multimedia.)_____ **Hrs per year**

b) Working with existing knowledge and existing works (performance of music & theater, design , directing plays, library work, study, practice, synthesis or summary of existing knowledge, self-improvement activities such as learning foreign language to study work in original language, learning new computer skills related to research and analysis.) _____ **Hrs per year**

c) Performance & exhibition and scholarly publications (assembling, writing & publishing results of research and/or creative production, on or off campus delivery of concerts, performances, exhibitions, recordings, broadcasts, & interactive media.)_____ **Hrs per year**

d) Presentations of research or about creative production (lectures, seminars, workshops, etc. presented at professional meetings or other public settings.)_____ **Hrs per year**

17) Over one academic year, what percent of your total time do you spend doing
teaching _____% scholarly & creative production _____%
service_____%

Comments: (please use an additional sheet if needed)

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